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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: The prophet Jonah prayed from the belly of the whale. Why is it, then, so difficult to pray enclosed here in Congress?

Lord, at times it seems we are drowning in a sea of confusion amidst contradictory currents. Like the prophet, we seem alive under water, with so much of the world swimming between You and us. Not knowing if we are only treading water, seeing just beneath the surface, or actually afraid of the depths, we survive, but do not know what to pray for.

Content to let the motion of this great Nation carry us where it will, we seem to live within the walls of a false security. The dangers and terror swirling around us cause us to doubt our own power, so we tend to trust outer forces to hold us for another day.

Help us, Lord, to recognize in ourselves Your reluctant prophet. Like Jonah, we need You to prove Yourself our savior. Have Your way with us. Spit us up onto the shores You would have us trod. Make us realistic in achieving Your purposes by addressing the uneasy issues You lay before us today. Show us the way to turn things around, and with repentant hearts become once again Your people.

We ask this, believing in the sign of Jonah, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) come forward

and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minutes on each side.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 800

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning in a pair of work boots that I have owned for 26 years to express my strong support for H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act.

I wore these boots when I worked for the Poweshiek County Road Department building roads and bridges on the county roads where I grew up. I wear them proudly today as a reminder of the hard work and sacrifice made every day in this country by working men and women who exercise their constitutional right to freedom of association by joining labor unions.

The Employee Free Choice Act provides greater protection to that freedom of association by providing for majority sign-up, first contract mediation and binding arbitration, and tougher penalties for violation of workers' rights.

Protecting the rights of workers has been a long and difficult struggle. Seventy-five years ago this month, Congress passed the Norris-LaGuardia Act, which declared it to be the public policy of the United States that employees be allowed to organize and engage in collective bargaining, free from coercion by their employers. The Em-

ployee Free Choice Act reinforces that public policy for labor negotiations in the 21st century.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important bill, and I look forward to the day when it is signed into law.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO A SECRET BALLOT

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today, the House will take up legislation that will remove the right of Americans to a secret ballot in their union elections. When asked, only 6 percent of Americans supported eliminating a secret ballot, while 89 percent supported keeping their rights.

Eighty-four percent of Americans said that they did not want their choices to be made public. And when asked about this legislation, only 14 percent of Americans said they supported it; 79 percent opposed.

Madam Speaker, we cannot advance the interests of Americans by taking away their right to a secret ballot. Since 2000, Congress has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to improve voting in America. We even support secret ballot elections in places like Poland and Afghanistan, where secret ballots are banned.

Madam Speaker, we know that the union movement has lost over 3,000 dues-paying members alone. But just because only 12 percent of Americans now choose to pay into a union is no reason to attack our rights as Americans to a secret ballot.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE USMC SERGEANT CLINTON W. AHLQUIST

(Mr. SALAZAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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